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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/470,377	12/22/1999	MASATO NISHIKAWA	TAIYO40.001A	6066
20995	7590	02/24/2006	EXAMINER	
KNOBBE MARTENS OLSON & BEAR LLP 2040 MAIN STREET FOURTEENTH FLOOR IRVINE, CA 92614			LESPERANCE, JEAN E	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
				2674

DATE MAILED: 02/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/470,377	NISHIKAWA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jean E Lesperance	2674	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 December 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1,2,7-11,16-18,21 and 22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 1,2,8-11,16-18,21 and 22 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 7 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 12/22/1999 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ . |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ . | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ . |

DETAILED ACTION

1. The amendment filed on December 12, 2005 is entered and claims 1, 2, 7-11, 16-18, 21 and 22 are pending.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent # 6,369,803 ("Brisebois et al.").

Regarding claim 7, Brisebois et al. teach a touch-operating input device comprising a display device for displaying operation function items and a touch panel which is provided separately from the display device and which is for selecting the function items by touch operation (the active edge user interface includes a flexible input device that extends along at least one edge of a display and responds to touch and pressure to implement one or more functions viewable on the display (column 3, lines 13-16)), wherein a touch-operation guide shape is formed on the touch-operation face of said touch panel (active edge input device 120 is a strip of material that extends along a border of display 110 and is responsive to touch or pressure (column 4, lines 4951)), wherein plural

continuously extending shapes extend from one end side to another end side on the touch-operation face (display 110 has a round geometrical shape, active edge input device 120 may form a complete circle around the display or only extend around a portion of the display (column 2, lines 61-64)). The prior art does not explicitly teach plural continuously extending shapes extend from one end side to another end side on the touch-operation face. However, the prior art teaches display 110 has a round geometrical shape, active edge input device 120 may form a complete circle around the display or only extend around a portion of the display (column 2, lines 61-64).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the display 110 has a round geometrical shape, active edge input device 120 may form a complete circle around the display or only extend around a portion of the display to obtain the plural continuously extending shapes extend from one end side to another end side on the touch-operation face because this would provide a user interface device that includes dynamically configurable flexible touch areas located near the perimeter of a display to support interactive communication between a user and a user environment.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 1, 2, 8-11, 17, 18, 21, and 22 are allowed.
4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the claimed invention is directed to a touch-operating input device.

Independent claim 1 identifies a uniquely distinct feature "control means for controlling said display device to display an image representing the touch-operation guide shape formed with the ribs of the touch-operation face of the touch panel, said image having substantially the same geometrical shape as the touch-operation guide shape formed with the ribs, wherein the operation function items are superposed on said image"

Independent claim 21 identifies a uniquely distinct feature "wherein at least one of the convex shape and the concave shape is disposed at a center portion serving as a reference for determining a center position on the touch-operation face".

Independent claim 22 identifies a uniquely distinct feature "controlling said display device to display an image representing the touch-operation guide shape formed with the ribs of the touch-operation face of the touch panel, said image having substantially the same geometrical shape as the touch-operation guide shape formed with the ribs".

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jean Lesperance whose telephone number is 571-272-7692. The examiner can normally be reached on from Monday to Friday between 8:00AM and 4:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Edouard, can be reached on 571-272-7603 .

Art Unit: 2674

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Washington, D.C. 20231

or faxed to:

(571) 273-8300 (for Technology Center 2600 only)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park II, 2121

Crystal drive, Arlington, VA, Sixth Floor (Receptionist).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application
or proceeding should be directed to the technology Center 2600 Customer
Service Office whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

Jean Lesperance



Art Unit 2674

Date 2/20/2006



PATRICK N. EDOUARD
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER